

Dr. Salyan Bhattarai

Written by Anupama Ghimire, Ph.D. Trainee



Dr. Salyan Bhattarai is a Scientist in the Biological Sciences Department at Paraza Pharma Inc. He grew up in Nepal and completed his undergraduate degree in Biotechnology from Kathmandu University in 2007. After graduation, he worked as a biotechnologist at Genetics Nepal, where he diagnosed human diseases using molecular biology techniques. In 2009, he received a scholarship to pursue his master's degree at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. Dr. Bhattarai's passion for studying muscle stem cells led him to research the role of CD24 in skeletal muscle differentiation at Erasmus Medical Center under the supervision of Dr. Gerben Schaaf. After completing his master's degree in 2011, he returned to Nepal and became a Department Head at Kantipur Valley College, where he set up labs, designed curricula, and counselled students on research. He also worked as a full-time lecturer for Kathmandu University. In 2013, Dr. Bhattarai received another scholarship to continue his Ph.D. at Freie University Berlin under the supervision of Dr. Simone Spuler and Dr. Eugen Feist, focusing on the role of immunoproteasomes in inflammatory muscle diseases. He completed his Ph.D. in 2017 and joined the Petrof lab at McGill University as a Postdoctoral Fellow, where he uncovered for the first time the role of trained immunity in the pathogenesis of Duchenne muscular dystrophy. His research was published in Nature Communication journal.

As a scientist at Paraza Pharma Inc., Dr. Bhattarai is currently involved in the drug development process, which includes developing assay, testing different biological inhibitors, conducting pre-clinical studies, and data analysis and presentation. Despite transitioning from academia to the industrial field, his research has always focused on autoimmune skeletal muscle diseases, allowing for a seamless career path. One of the most exciting aspects of his job is that "every day he feels proud that he is developing new drugs that have the potential to enhance the lives of patients". Being part of a team that



contributes to drug development is rewarding, although finding the good candidate compounds that passes through multiple tests can be challenging. Nevertheless, Dr. Bhattarai accepts this as part of his job.

Dr. Bhattarai believes that every success story is intertwined with failure, and he shared his own experiences with failure. He emphasized the importance of failure stories as they help us learn and grow in life. Despite facing several rejections to get into his desired PhD program, he persevered and continued to develop his scientific skills. Eventually, his persistence paid off, and he succeeded in securing a full scholarship for his PhD program. He advises NEVER GIVE UP on your goals, no matter how difficult the path may seem.

Dr. Bhattarai highlighted the importance of certain skills that he believes are crucial for graduate students, including time management, effective communication, and presentation skills. He emphasized the need to prioritize tasks and manage the time effectively to cope with the stress that comes with graduate life. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of mental health in graduate study and suggested that students should not view graduate life as the end of the world. He advised students to socialize, build good networks, and use their soft skills to develop career outside of academia.